DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 470 585 HE 035 488

AUTHOR	Powney, Janet, Ed.
TITLE	Successful Student Diversity: Case Studies of Practice in Learning and Teaching and Widening Participation. Good Practice. Guidance for Senior Managers and Practitioners.
INSTITUTION	Higher Education Funding Council for England, Bristol.
REPORT NO	HEFCE-2002/48
PUB DATE	2002-11-00
NOTE	34p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Higher Education Funding Council for England, Northavon House, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol, BS16 1QD England. Tel: 0117-931-7317; Fax: 0117-931-7203; Web site: http://www.hefce.ac.uk. For full text: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/ hefce/2002/02_48.htm.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	Case Studies; *Diversity (Student); *Higher Education; *Learning; Student Participation; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	*England

ABSTRACT

This document provides examples of practice to improve planning at a school or departmental level in widening participation (including disability) and learning and teaching. It is not prescriptive, but identifies common principles that institutions funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England can adapt to their own circumstances to help them recruit and support a diverse range of students. The guide is based on 23 case studies in higher education institutions. What emerges clearly from the case studies is how adjusting methods of learning, teaching, and assessment to meet the needs of a very wide range of students, including mature and disabled students, is benefiting all students. Changes of this sort require a culture shift in many departments and a strategic approach to improve services for students. The first attachment (annex) lists members of the steering group, and the second contains list of abbreviations. (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

November 2002/**48**

Good practice

Guidance for senior managers and practitioners

This document provides examples of practice to improve planning at a school or departmental level in widening participation (including disability) and learning and teaching. It is not prescriptive, but identifies common principles that institutions can adapt to their own circumstances, to help them recruit and support a diverse range of students.

This report is for information

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Kiler

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Successful student diversity

Case studies of practice in learning and teaching and widening participation

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

© HEFCE 2002

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND hefce

Successful student diversity

Case studies of practice in learning and teaching and widening participation

Edited by Janet Powney
The Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the co-ordination teams (Action on Access, National Co-ordination Team for the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund, and the National Disability Team) for the hard work they put into collecting the case studies. We would also like to thank the members of the Learning and Teaching Support Network who were involved in producing this guidance and offered support and suggestions. We are grateful to Janet Powney for bringing together and editing the information, and writing the bulk of this document.

Finally, we would like to thank the institutions that agreed to act as case studies for this document, and the contacts who worked with the co-ordination teams to provide the information.

Contents

Executive summary

Introduction

Background
Context
This document

Themes from practice

Introduction
Drivers for change
The students
Mainstreaming
Planning for lifelong learning
Conclusions

Annex A: Steering group

List of abbreviations

Successful student diversity
Case studies of practice in learning and teaching and widening participation

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Heads of HEFCE-funded further education colleges Heads of universities in Northern Ireland
Of interest to those responsible for	Strategic planning, Widening participation, Learning and teaching
Reference	**2002/48**
Publication date	November 2002
Enquiries to	Christine Fraser tel 0117 931 7467 e-mail c.fraser@hefce.ac.uk

Executive summary

Purpose

1. This document provides examples of practice, and identifies common principles, to improve strategic planning at a school or departmental level in widening participation and associated learning, teaching and assessment. It responds to requests from higher education institutions (HEIs) for guidance on good practice to inform decision making and planning at these levels.

Key points

2. The guide has been developed with the help of a steering group drawn from higher education (see Annex A) . It is based on 23 case studies in HEIs, and complements previous guidance on developing and implementing strategies for widening participation (HEFCE 01/36) and for learning and teaching (HEFCE 01/37).

3. We use the term 'widening participation' to denote activities to recruit students from the groups that higher education institutions have identified as under-represented, and then to ensure their success. These groups may include disabled people, either as a group in their own right or as students who are both disabled and/or belong to another under-represented group.

4. Two external factors are having a major influence on the supply and demand of higher education applicants and students. The first is government policy, with targets to widen

participation in higher education to 50 per cent of 18-30 year-olds by 2010. The second is recent legislation to ensure equality of opportunities and provision for people with disabilities, and those from ethnic minorities. The case studies illustrate how HEIs are reviewing their access and recruitment policies and procedures to respond to these external drivers.

5. Probably the greatest change is in the support that institutions expect to provide, not just at the beginning of a programme but throughout a student's career, to encourage student retention. Examples include drop-in centres, extra academic and personal tutoring, personal development plans, and various kinds of e-learning.

6. What emerges clearly from the case studies is how adjusting methods of learning, teaching and assessment to meet the needs of a very wide range of students – including mature students and disabled students – in practice benefits *all* students.

7. These changes require a culture shift in many departments, and a strategic approach to improve services for students. As the case studies show, new initiatives usually require enthusiasts or 'champions' to persuade colleagues to adapt their strategies at departmental and institutional level.

8. Departments are resourced in different ways, and institutions provide varying levels of central support in terms of advice, personnel and facilities to support the increasingly diverse needs of students. Staff development programmes figure largely in the case studies and are an essential factor in successful widening participation strategies. Widening participation strategies are fairly new in some institutions, so evaluation of their effectiveness is patchy, but there are helpful examples of institutional support for monitoring and evaluation.

Action

9. This document is for guidance and information. It is not prescriptive, but provides examples that institutions can draw on in their work, to help them recruit and support a diverse range of students. Support for institutions is available through Action on Access, the National Co-ordination Team for the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) and the National Disability Team. The work on good practice guidance will be carried forward by the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) subject centres.

Introduction

Background

10. Consultations with higher education institutions (HEIs) indicated that they would appreciate guidance on good practice to inform decision making and planning for learning and teaching and widening participation, at a departmental level. In response we have produced this guide.

11. The guide was developed with the help of a steering group drawn from higher education (see Annex A), and the HEFCE's national co-ordination teams. Twenty-three case studies illustrate how different departments are working to widen participation and adapt teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of a broad range of students, including those with disabilities.

12. We commissioned preliminary work[1] which indicated that widening participation strategy is often seen as an institution-wide responsibility, rather than arising from departmental initiatives. Moreover, many departments are unaware of any central institutional strategy and its relationship to departmental activities. Some departments are trying to widen participation, but with a few exceptions there is little evidence of clear goals, target setting, strategic planning, monitoring or other components of a strategic approach. Departmental planning is influenced by differences in culture, values and management style between institutions, differences that tend to swamp any distinctive strategic approaches within disciplines.

13. In general, departments have not been taking a proactive approach to see how curricula or teaching might need to be adapted for students with disabilities. The norm has been rather that departments respond to individual disabled students as they present themselves. A more strategic view is needed to meet the requirements of recent legislation related to services for disabled people. The HEFCE suggested that institutions could refer in their widening participation strategies to how they would improve provision for students with disabilities ('Widening participation in higher education', HEFCE 01/29), and we would encourage institutions to continue developing this strategic planning.

14. Departmental activity has been stimulated by special project funding and/or by the enthusiasm of an individual or group of committed staff. For widening participation policies to have any impact, all teaching staff must act on the implications in their everyday work rather than expect a designated individual or service unit to take separate responsibility for implementation, monitoring and review of the policies. We would hope that continued work by the LTSN subject centres to develop further good practice guidance will help to support

[1] Professor Graham Gibbs from the National Co-ordination Team facilitated three focus group meetings of heads of department from 16 departments covered by four subject centres of the Learning and Teaching Support Network. Discussions focused on departmental strategies for access, disability and learning and teaching.

teaching staff in this work.

Context

15. In working with students, teaching staff face the daunting task of putting into practice the higher education policies and advice emanating from Government, funding councils, and quality assurance agencies, as well as complying with new equal opportunities legislation and professional standards. This context is constantly changing at the same time as institutions undergo re-organisations, expansions, mergers and shifting priorities.

16. In particular the case studies should be seen against the background of our consultation on how to achieve the Government's target of 50 per cent of 18-30 year-olds participating in higher education by 2010 ('Supply and demand in higher education, HEFCE 01/62). Further, the emergence of foundation degrees may again focus on academic working practices that support student retention.

Disability legislation

17. A significant factor in widening participation is the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), which makes it illegal to discriminate against disabled people in employment and in the provision of goods, facilities and services.

18. The DDA applies in full to HEIs in their capacity as employers but not until recently in their capacity as educational providers – although schools, colleges and universities have been required to provide information for disabled people. 'Disability statements: a guide to good practice' (HEFCE 98/66) gives recommendations on the content and presentation of this information, in order to help institutions improve their disability statements.

19. Under the Act, a disabled person is anyone who has a physical, sensory or mental impairment which seriously affects their day-to-day activities. This can include people with heart disease, epilepsy, severe disfigurement, depression, schizophrenia, Down's syndrome and many other types of impairment (Disability Rights Commission factsheet).

20. From September 2002 HEIs have had a duty to implement the new part IV of the DDA, which came into force as a result of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001. The legislation requires HEIs to be proactive rather than reactive in meeting the potential needs of disabled students. The Government has published a code of practice giving guidance on implementing the new legislation. And we have made available additional funding (see HEFCE 02/21).

Race relations legislation

21. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 strengthens and extends the scope of the Race Relations Act 1976 by outlawing racial discrimination by public authorities, including HEIs in *all* their functions. Among the requirements for higher education is the specific duty to monitor the recruitment and progress of ethnic minority students (and staff). The

Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) has powers to enforce compliance with the specific duties. The CRE has produced a statutory code of practice, and four non-statutory guides, to help authorities in England and Wales meet their duties (on the web at www.cre.gov.uk/duty). It also publishes a framework for race equality policies in HEIs.

Widening participation

22. We use the term 'widening participation' to denote activities to recruit students from the groups that HEIs have identified as under-represented, and then to ensure their success. These groups may include disabled people, either as a group in their own right or as students who are both disabled and belong to another under-represented group. Such groups could be people from a particular cultural or socio-economic background, or even a particular gender, if they are under-represented on a programme.

23. We intend to improve our support for increasing and widening participation, as described in HEFCE 02/22. This includes rationalising existing initiatives, and subsuming all HEFCE work to raise the aspirations and attainments of young people to enter higher education into a new initiative, Partnerships for Progression (HEFCE 01/73).

24. We are working with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on the Partnerships for Progression initiative, building on current extensive regional and local partnerships. The intention is to link together into a more coherent framework the activities for successive age groups of school and further education (FE) students, and across different progression routes. Significant investment will be required to increase HE participation through these partnerships.

25. We also plan to set sector-wide targets for both widening participation and retention of students. Widening participation funding will continue to depend upon the submission of satisfactory targets, and satisfactory progress towards those targets.

Related guidance

26. This set of case studies complements other HEFCE guidance tailored to the needs of the sector, including:

a. 'Strategic planning in higher education: a guide for heads of institution, senior managers and members of governing bodies' (HEFCE 00/24).

b. 'Strategies for widening participation in higher education: a guide to good practice' (HEFCE 01/36). This was based on analysis of HEIs' strategies by the Action on Access team, which co-ordinates our widening participation activities. It covers developing a strategy; activities to widen participation at each stage of the student life-cycle – from raising aspirations to finding employment; the issue of student success; and support from the HEFCE.

c. 'Strategies for learning and teaching in higher education: a guide to good practice' (HEFCE 01/37). This document, a companion guide to HEFCE 01/36, was based on analysis of HEIs' strategies by the national co-ordination team for the TQEF.

It identifies key strategic themes in learning and teaching; draws out good practice in relation to these themes, and the links with widening participation; provides illustrative case studies; and explains the support available from the HEFCE.

Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF)

27. Through the TQEF we aim to have clear links between strategies for learning and teaching, widening participation, and disability, within a framework designed to maintain and improve quality and standards in learning and teaching. (See HEFCE 02/24.)

This document

28. We recognise and support the diversity of the higher education sector, which is reflected in the case studies provided here. This document is not prescriptive, but gives examples that institutions can draw on in their work. The 23 case studies describe practice in progress, and we have included contact details so that those interested can discuss the initiatives with colleagues who are actively involved in them.

29. Annex B gives a list of abbreviations and acronyms.

Themes from practice

Introduction

30. This guide is grounded in examples of initiatives to widen participation in English HEIs. It is intended to encourage heads of departments[2] and programme leaders to develop their own ideas and activities to suit their organisation. How the guide and case studies are used will depend on the ethos of the institution, its priorities and current practices for widening participation. The case studies illustrate factors that colleagues have found can facilitate, obstruct or change the likely long-term impact of the initiatives for the department and the institution. An important influence is the interaction between departments, faculties and institutional strategies, and the people who are charged with implementing them.

31. We also need to recognise the different approaches that subject teams take to supporting greater inclusivity within the student population. Subject interests place varying demands and expectations on students and staff. The case studies show that different approaches to resolving issues of participation can be successful, especially where account is taken of the demands that widening participation may place upon learning and teaching strategies and practices.

32. So the case studies represent a mix of current good practice, innovation and aspiration, to act as prompts for developing departmental strategies. The subject centres of the LTSN will collect further examples and make them available on their web-sites. This section is organised around themes emerging from the case studies, illustrated with examples of current practice. The first part outlines some of the drivers for change and focuses on the relationship between institutional strategies and what departments do. The second part concentrates on support given at different points in the student life-cycle. The third section is concerned with issues of 'mainstreaming' – encouraging previously under-represented groups (such as disabled students) into the student population. For example, staff faced with a widening participation agenda may encounter new tensions in their work. Concluding comments are under the banner of 'Planning and supporting lifelong learning', the corollary of widening participation.

Drivers for change

Legislation and directives

33. The major legislative change has been the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), which updated the Disability Discrimination Act and came into force in September 2002. SENDA requires HEIs 'not to treat disabled students less favourably, without justification, than students who are not disabled; and to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that people who are disabled are not put at a substantial

---

[2] 'Department' is used for convenience and is intended to included 'schools' or even 'faculties' where these are equivalent.

disadvantage to people who are not disabled, in accessing higher education services'.

34. The anticipatory nature of the new legislation has '*significantly contributed to promoting a positive change at programme level*' (University College Worcester). The case studies show that HEIs are moving from reactive policies to adopting more proactive approaches (see Case study 21, and paragraph 40 below).

35. At the same time the Government is requiring the sector to increase the proportion of students from under-represented groups and to widen participation. On a detailed level, the Council of Europe has issued a directive that all courses on the built environment should incorporate inclusive design.

36. The sector is also influenced by quality assurance procedures, such as Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) visits, the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), the HEFCE's requirements for HEIs to submit human resource strategies, and by financial incentives such as the TQEF.

37. Widening participation in continuing professional development is endorsed by national requirements for professional registration in, for example, teaching and nursing. As these became all-graduate professions, so those who had already qualified through non-graduate programmes felt impelled to upgrade their education . Without further qualifications, many non-graduate professionals felt they would be unable to compete in the labour market or have credibility in teaching new students.

Supply and demand

38. Supply and demand is not constant and can be affected by political changes such as the decision to expand the overall numbers entering higher education, or to target particular groups or professions.

39. Institutions or subjects that have difficulty in recruiting students are more likely to be flexible about entry criteria and more supportive of applicants than those that are oversubscribed. The University of Gloucestershire and associated project partners found that low numbers of disabled students were taking geography, earth and environmental science courses. To address this, they reviewed and modified their approach to fieldwork, which they felt often '*emphasises masculine, youthful and able-bodied people conquering difficult terrain*'. Once students have been accepted on to a programme of study, the HEI may need to adapt teaching and learning methods in order to retain them.

40. Ultimately it is students' choice of institution and subject that determines areas in which HEIs will need or want to stimulate demand. Some subjects, such as modern languages and classics, have declined in student numbers; other subjects are over-subscribed. Widening participation strategies may be essential in sustaining under-recruiting departments.

Institutional factors

41. In return for earmarked funding, we have asked each HEI to produce a human resources strategy and implementation plan. These plans set the overall priorities and targets for the institution and thereby give departments a framework for local implementation.

42. However, the best laid plans may not come to fruition, particularly if they are disrupted by mergers, re-organisations and reviews of how best to organise the academic year. York St John College took advantage of moving to a single site and internal reorganisation to review the provision made for local and regional communities. This resulted in the School of Sport Science and Psychology emphasising vocational components of its courses.

Institutional strategies

43. Each HEI has developed its own strategy for widening participation depending on the overall management structure, central co-ordinating or facilitating units, and the extent of devolution for resources and policy. A common approach is for an institution to set the overarching policy through consultation with its various committees and groups. The policy usually has strategic goals written into the human resource strategy. The principal models emerging from these strategies are described below, but approaches to widening participation usually draw on more than one model. Priorities are reflected in the HEI's structures and resource allocation, and in the degree and nature of central support compared with devolved management and financial responsibility.

Model one: Institutional strategy, department operationalising, central education unit facilitating

44. In the most centrally controlled strategy, departments are not expected to develop their own policies but to implement what has already been decided at institutional level. This operates in structures that are highly devolved for most matters. However, it may be that policies agreed between institution pursue new directions that take time to filter down to departments that are still implementing their individual institution's earlier policies.

45. Most HEIs set up a central unit to work across the institution to support departments. University College Worcester, UMIST, the University of Salford and the University of Hull have central dedicated disability services within offices for student support or equality of opportunity. Other kinds of central units include those for educational development (Imperial College), teaching and learning development (University of Sussex), quality assurance (University of Southampton), widening participation (Liverpool John Moores University), and widening participation and disability (University of Sussex). Commitment to policy is reflected, for example, in the resource allocation at Liverpool John Moores, where two principal lecturers were appointed to drive components of the learning, teaching and assessment strategy.

46. However, this approach is not universal. For example the University of the West of England expects faculties to make their own plans to support widening participation. Many institutions' central units employ specialist staff to advise on policy implementation, provide support including staff development, and take responsibility for monitoring and review. The support provided centrally often includes staffing, either within the central unit (such as the widening participation officer at the University of Plymouth) or in departments. For example, York St John College appointed three principal lecturers to support cross-school activities.

47. One of the most highly devolved structures is at the Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, a research-intensive university. The university has established a Centre for Educational Development as part of its learning and teaching strategy, with funding from the TQEF. By this means the university is encouraging academics to participate in implementing the strategy. Departments such as Chemical Engineering and Chemical Technology do not have a university written strategy to respond to, but the scheme does allow for the appointment of an Education Development Co-ordinator as a key person within the department and a link with the Centre for Educational Development. One programme that has taken advantage of the university's non-prescriptive strategic framework has specified educational aims, strategies for supporting students and their learning, and plans for monitoring and improvement processes in the new MEng in chemical engineering. The department is building on its own tradition and pride in good teaching within the widening participation agenda.

48. The University of Hull's approach to disability can also be included under this heading, as it has established structures to facilitate departmental activity. These structures include: a disability committee to consider strategic issues and monitor plans and provision for disabled students; a disability forum to generate new ideas to improve procedures and provision for disabled students; and departmental academic disability tutors. Disability-related services are better resourced than in many other HEIs, with eight staff in the dedicated disability service located within Student Support Services.

Model two: Institutional strategy resulting in direct support for departmental initiative

49. The University of Huddersfield has a commitment '*to increase opportunities by providing an expanded portfolio of courses, more flexibly available, to a greater number of students*'. The Department of Computing and Mathematical Science responded with a pre-entry programme funded by the university and the European Social Fund – a flexible course tailored to the financial and childcare needs of potential students. As with other pre-entry initiatives, this will have an impact on the university and department's teaching and learning strategy and associated staff development.

50. Sheffield Hallam University's well-articulated learning and teaching strategy not only stimulates academic development and quality enhancement in each department, but also provides a framework for responding to changes in the national agenda.

51. At University College Worcester the Department of Applied Education expects issues to do with equality of opportunity to feature in the design and content of every module.

Model three: Institutional strategy implemented through general devolution of resources to departments

52. Devolution of responsibility and/or resources implies wider tolerance of the order of priorities followed by departments than where control is held centrally. The institution maintains a quality assurance role, as in the case of Liverpool John Moores where schools identify and report on local priorities from among the university's goals.

53. Institutional strategies are dynamic. There are several examples of policies being established centrally and subsequently devolved to departments. Changes are likely to depend partly on internal confidence about a shift in culture across the institution, as well as on external constraints and support such as the TQEF. Liverpool John Moores has allocated responsibility and funding for teaching and learning directly to its 13 schools. However, the university retains a central unit concerned with recruitment, widening participation, student retention and employability skills.

54. The University of Plymouth devolved an element of the postcode premium funding to faculties to enable them to devise and develop a widening participation strategy. Each faculty appointed a member of staff to take a lead role in widening participation and fostering both recruitment and retention. This widening participation officer is able to use local and external research as the basis for developing initiatives targeted at particular groups of students within each faculty.

55. The University of Central England also operates a devolved structure. Each faculty has its own budget and management structures, but is expected to act in accordance with the centralised directorate priority statement, which includes widening participation as one of its objectives. All faculties are allocated a share of TQEF funding, and are required to have their own learning and teaching strategies. The Business School (equivalent to a faculty) constructed its own strategy consistent with the university's overall strategy for learning and teaching. It thus has access to resources, personnel, support and knowledge from both the school and the centre – especially through the Central Educational Development Unit.

56. The University of Sussex devolved funding to schools working towards particular institutional goals, including '*to respond flexibly and rapidly to changing student needs in a competitive environment*' and '*to enhance the status of learning and teaching*'. The School of Legal Studies adopted a strategy to identify priorities for the school, and a transparent system to incorporate the project money into the allocation for teaching – so that project leaders' work was both accounted for and seen as the part of the school's activities. This illustrates strategic coherence between university, faculty and school.

57. Devolving mainstream disability funding can be a successful strategy to ensure compliance with disability legislation at departmental level. However, success depends on a perceived fair distribution of resources. Dissatisfaction has been expressed by one department that was actively recruiting and supporting disabled students but received the same funding as other departments with very few disabled students.

Model four: Institutional strategy implemented through devolution of resources to departments for specific purposes

58. Some HEIs' strategies for devolution include more closely specified allocations. Sometimes these are open to a bidding system. For example, the University of Central England awarded TQEF funds to faculties that successfully bid for cross-institutional initiatives. At the University of Salford there was a successful bid to the university's widening access fund to develop the MSc in Inclusive Design. The disability tutor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Hull has ring-fenced resources for disability-related activities that cannot be financed through other channels.

59. University College Worcester distributed funding to all departments for implementing its strategy on disability. In return the Equal Opportunities Centre requested colleagues to complete a departmental audit of provision and practices compared with the QAA's Code of Practice for students with disabilities. All departments were then asked to produce an action plan to illustrate compliance with the new SENDA legislation. Interaction between departments and the Equal Opportunities Centre is an important component of the institution's strategy for providing a good service for the 4 per cent of students who have declared a disability.

60. At the University of Huddersfield, the university and the European Social Fund provided means-tested bursaries and child-care allowances for women students to undertake a maths access course. This left the Department of Computing and Mathematical Sciences the challenge of identifying strategies to provide the best learning and employability support for the mixed community of new students including mature women.

Institutional resources support a departmental initiative in a different way at UMIST. In the Department of Computation, if disabled students need special arrangements for assessment the additional costs are paid for either by the department or by the Central Examination Office.

61. When the University of Plymouth re-launched its web-site, the Faculty of Human Science created the Human Science Information and Support Gateway to support new and existing students, especially mature students and disabled students.

Model five: Institutional strategy developed in partnership or requiring partnership

62. All HEIs operate in partnerships with local communities or professional groups as well as in partnerships between the central services and departments. Some of these partnerships exist primarily to widen participation in higher education.

63. Both the University of Teesside and York St John College have formed strong partnerships within their local and regional areas as part of their widening participation strategies. One initiative at York St John College was developed in consultation and partnership with local further education colleges, National Training Organisations, local employers and other organisations in the area. The collaboration had important outcomes in

embedding 'vocational' elements firmly into the whole curriculum, and encouraging 20 long-term job seekers to study for a semester on a vocationally-based module.

64. The University of Teesside determined to widen participation by raising the local population's low educational attainment and expectations. The Business School at Teesside based its own learning, teaching and assessment strategy on that of the university, structured around the student life-cycle. The co-ordination between the school and the university maximises both student and staff opportunities to benefit, and to contribute to the institution-wide resources of the Centre for Lifelong Learning and to the summer schools for prospective and existing students.

65. Queen Mary, University of London has taken a similar approach. Operating in disadvantaged areas of London it took a strategic decision to work in partnership with London Guildhall and the London School of Economics to raise both aspirations and attainment levels of A-level students in maths and science in local schools. It established a Learning Development Unit to support departments participating in the scheme. The outcome has been comprehensive pre-entry support and strong partnerships between the providers of the support programme and the institutions. The project has stimulated departments to review their learning and teaching strategies to take account of the expectations and needs of students who have had extra pre-entry support.

66. Working in partnership has proved very productive in the London Nursing Initiative. Early collaboration between departments within King's College London developed into joint funding and support from the London Development Agency, the European Social Fund and the Waterloo Project Board. The whole project is now characterised by co-operation among educational, nursing and health organisations across neighbouring local authorities.

Model six: Institutional policy/strategy not necessarily consistent with departmental practices

67. Not surprisingly in large and complex HEIs, there are some inconsistencies and apparent gaps in communication. This is especially true where new policies are being put in place. For example, strategies to support students (and staff) with disabilities should ideally be put into effect across all areas of the institution.

68. Institutional policies and plans are ineffective if departments and schools are unaware of them or how to implement them. It seems for example that not all academics are aware of their institution's plans for the inclusion of disabled students, so there could be wide gaps between central policy and the strategies and activities of departments. More effective monitoring would help to identify such discrepancies and ensure that academic planning at all levels makes direct reference to disability.

69. One way of addressing problems of communication is to appoint staff with precise responsibilities. One example of practice common across many institutions can be seen at the University of Hull, which appoints departmental academic disability tutors who are

trained, recognised, publicised, expected to communicate with others in the institution, and to act as go-betweens for students and other staff .

Departmental initiatives

70. Where departments initiate widening participation activities, they could be in tune with the institutional strategy or set up in the absence of any such institutional leadership. However, one outcome could be that the departments stimulate institutional change. For example, the teaching and learning strategy at the University of Gloucestershire has been influenced by the HEFCE-funded disability project undertaken by the Geography Discipline Network (Case study 21).

71. The Faculty of the Built Environment in the University of West of England took the initiative without a university-wide strategy. For the faculty, the main drivers were the establishment of a Teaching and Learning Steering Group to produce a strategy, and a number of QAA visits scheduled for 1997. The steering group became the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, with responsibility for implementing and monitoring the five-year strategy.

72. The strategy began not with a series of projects or activities, but by establishing a set of underpinning values shared by staff and students.

'The principles were set out clearly, and have become increasingly integrated into the faculty's life and development. Three key factors in ensuring this have been:

- *a clear mapping of the responsibilities on colleagues at different levels within the faculty*
- *the use of the principles by curriculum panels in looking at new curriculum proposals*
- *the use and embedding of the principles in programme review.*

73. It seems that it was left to the faculty to allocate its own resources to learning and teaching developments, and subsequently to widening participation and disability initiatives. To do this, the faculty appointed a senior person to take responsibility and to facilitate integration with learning and teaching. The principles ensure that all kinds and levels of activity in the faculty are compatible with the overall strategy, and enable developments to take place at programme level even if school and institutional support are not strong. This learning and teaching strategy is now six years old and has incorporated widening participation and improving student retention, but has not yet moved to direct integration of disability.

Research

74. In exploring widening participation possibilities, a number of HEIs have started to make use of evidence, either from existing studies or by conducting their own research. Evidence has prompted institutions to address issues of student support head-on, having

gained a valuable insight into the difficulties experienced by some students. Research at the University of Plymouth has included a longitudinal study of the perceptions, expectations and learning needs of new and potential students.

75. An example of the complete research feedback loop is in the increasing level of disability awareness within the school promoted by the Salford University Research Focus on Accessible Environments project (SURFACE). This concerned the development of an accessible distance-learning MSc in Inclusive Design. About half the students on this course have a disability. The programme director was aware the course would attract a high percentage of disabled students. As a direct outcome of this research, the subject matter of many courses offered by the school now incorporate physical access considerations as an integral aspect.

Student feedback

76. Feedback from the increasing number of disabled students studying at UMIST has been reported as by far the most influential driver for encouraging the Department of Computation to create an effective learning environment for disabled students.

77. Similarly University College Worcester rates student feedback as the most influential driver for change, as staff identify specific needs and offer appropriate support. As a result, there have been significant improvements in assessed work. York St John College also reports benefits from student feedback, especially in relation to disabled students who are able to identify their needs and problems. In both institutions, student comments led to the colleges putting into effect changes in teaching and learning styles that resulted in significant improvement in students' experiences and attainment.

Role of champion

78. Change requires champions – people who recognise a problem and are committed to tackling it. Such commitment may be long term, particularly for issues related to equality of opportunity.

79. Champions need to represent different interests and levels within an organisation and to be able to communicate effectively with each other. Those who have personal interests and commitment through their own family situations, for example through experience of disability, may enhance successful integration of practice and policy. Sceptical colleagues are also more likely to be won over by champions with high standing and credibility.

80. There is danger of equality of opportunity becoming marginalised either for individual enthusiasts or in pockets of interesting practice in isolation from other departments. Imperial College recognised that its departmental strategy did not have 'deep reach' beyond individual enthusiasts. Its approach has been to promote active links between departments and the Education Development Centre but to depend on enthusiasts for implementing change.

81. University College Worcester is working towards having a designated equal opportunities representative in each department. However, champions may have to work in relative isolation and their commitment to widening participation may preclude following different career opportunities.

Staff development and training opportunities

82. Staff development can both stimulate and support change. Widening participation puts fresh demands on the teaching skills of staff who may be unfamiliar with the needs of the new student groups. Most of the case studies in this guide include development programmes to help staff respond to these demands.

83. In terms of recruitment, Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication recognised that the different routes for students' admission raised 'certain challenges' for staff. To assist in a necessary culture change, one department set up staff development workshops to discuss admissions criteria and procedures for applicants who were not meeting the normal admissions requirement of a portfolio of work. There were also departmental discussions and new support groups for staff.

84. Recently, disability awareness training has featured in many HEIs including the Universities of Gloucestershire, Hull, Liverpool John Moores, West of England, and Salford, and Queen Mary, University of London. Such training is designed partly to encourage staff to generate ideas for supporting students with difficulties in accessing facilities, such as web-sites. The University of Hull has targeted staff for special disability training, and gives new and established lecturers the opportunity to complete a learning module that contributes to accreditation by the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT). The University of Salford deployed a less direct form of staff training. The course leader actively involved disabled staff or staff with experience of disability as members of the team or advisers to the programme. This has created a unique approach to developing an accessible programme but may not be easily transferable to other HEIs.

85. Staff are reviewing their expectations and methods of working in parallel with changes in student characteristics. In this way staff development is integrated with on-going work. At the Geography Discipline Network project (Case study 21), discipline specialists on fieldwork worked with disabled students participating in the course. It was expected that staff learning on the job, about how to meet the needs of students with disabilities doing fieldwork, would extrapolate to learning and teaching in other circumstances. This would raise awareness of barriers to full participation in all learning activities, and lead staff to develop strategies to overcome these barriers.

86. A different but still fairly direct approach is at the University of the West of England, where the requirement for staff to 'justify' their teaching, learning and assessment methods stimulates considerable internal discussion and debate. Similarly, at the University of Sussex, in creating links between widening participation, disability and learning and teaching strategies the onus is on staff to argue their case. For example they will need to argue: *'that a particular mode of teaching or assessment is essential to the achievement of the learning*

outcomes or to the intellectual integrity of the course if these modes substantially disadvantage certain students'.

87. Changing one aspect of student provision influences existing activities, and staff need to keep pace. The Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Plymouth recognised that staff across the institution needed training on how to update the web-site, and how to use it to complement their own work with students. The London Nursing Initiative invested in joint staff development activity and a five-day programme designed to help further and higher education staff support the project client group.

88. Offering staff development may not be a dependable driver for change. When staff training is voluntary, attendance can be poor and participants tend to be those who do not need to have their awareness raised or their attitudes changed. The School of Biological Sciences at Liverpool John Moores University makes attendance compulsory for all academic staff and senior technical staff at one-day workshops on disability issues, held three times a year. Another way of attracting staff could be to aim more generally at student-focused teaching to increase retention rates, rather than isolating a particular group such as disabled students.

89. Various staff development activities detailed in the case studies help staff to recognise the diversity of students' experience and knowledge that enables them to succeed at the highest level. HEIs acknowledge that staff development should improve understanding about differences in new intakes likely to affect teaching and learning. It is also necessarily about changing attitudes – to convince staff who are uncertain of the implications or wisdom of widening participation that it will benefit students, staff and the institution.

The students

Getting them in

90. A major difficulty in extending participation is to convince potential students that what is on offer is appropriate for them. They may have had poor experience of schooling, may lack self-confidence, and/or come from families where higher education is unusual or unknown. They are also unlikely to meet standard entry requirements, and may be from lower socio-economic groups where education is normally valued only if it enhances job prospects.

91. For students without standard A-level entry qualifications, there are many access programmes to HE, and systems for accreditation of prior learning (APL). However, changing routes into higher education has consequences for recruitment and interview procedures. For example, for art and design courses the applicants traditionally present a portfolio of work. Where this was waived for non-traditional entrants at Ravensbourne College, admissions tutors had to review the criteria for admission, and the skills and qualities required to complete the programme successfully.

92. HE providers have adopted various recruitment strategies, including media advertisements, leaflets, mail shots and posters, to encourage school students and those who have already left school to proceed to undergraduate study. For example, the London Nursing Initiative targeted sites frequented by potential students – health centres, public libraries, community centres, hospital reception desks, FE colleges and adult education centres. The campaign centred on four individuals presented as role models, who were featured on posters, leaflets and a web-site. An important aspect was to prepare HE providers for an increased level of enquiries.

93. The University of Sheffield has a package of measures to attract and support school students (13-16 year-olds) from low income families who are in the first generation of their family wanting to go to university.

Informed consumers

94. The London Nursing Initiative took practical steps to ensure that potential students understood the range of options available by providing a web-site. In addition to student stories and general information about nursing and links to other nursing sites, the site has interactive components for visitors to identify their strengths and weaknesses in relation to a nursing career.

Assumptions about students as learners

95. An assumption in the case studies is that higher education should support students in becoming self-confident enough to be self-referring and autonomous learners. The London College of Printing is explicit on this matter: all students at all levels are likely to need study support at some time in order to achieve the management of independent learning by the end of their programme. Several programmes (including the Early Childhood Studies programme at University College Worcester) expect students to monitor their own progress and identify their own strengths and weaknesses.

96. The University of Plymouth's Human Science Information and Support Gateway encourages student autonomy by enabling students and staff to communicate through a bulletin board and e-mail discussion forums. The latter cater for diversity in the student population with, for example, dedicated forums for mature students.

Student life-cycle from pre-entry to maximising retention

97. The student life-cycle can be interpreted in two ways: where students are in relation to a higher education course, or where they are in relation to their educational career. The former will consider the needs of learners before, at the beginning and during their course of study. The latter will concern their formal education and qualifications in relation to other life experiences and age. Providers take both into account in their widening participation strategies – whether designing a pre-entry course for mature men and women, encouraging higher attainment for A-level students living in disadvantaged areas, or providing in-service programmes for qualified nurses (Sheffield Hallam). The case studies reflect some of the

flexibility and variety of approaches to widening participation in the higher education sector.

Pre-entry programmes

98. Strategies are being explored to encourage and prepare potential students by attending to their practical and academic concerns. At the practical level, Queen Mary, University of London recognises that students from lower socio-economic groups 'need to earn to learn' and therefore pays them to attend Saturday schools. This is in addition to the laboratory experience it provides to boost academic performance both for adult learners and sixth formers just before A-level physics exams.

99. Other practical measures at the University of Salford include training students with disabilities, before they start the MSc in Inclusive Design, to use enabling software and access the e-learning system. The London Nursing Initiative addresses the special concerns of mature students – especially lack of confidence and coping with practical constraints of family life.

100. Examples of pre-entry academic ventures at the University of Teesside include 'Older and Bolder', an induction pre-enrolment event for mature students; and bridging courses for holders of HNDs to enter directly onto the three-year BSc Informatics course to complete at the end of the following year. And there are many access courses, such as the programme for mature women returners, 'Women into Technology and Science', run by the University of Huddersfield Department of Computing and Mathematical Sciences. Emphasis in this access course is on peer support, flexible tutorial help and pace of learning, and study of real life problems.

Course design

101. Identifying the characteristics of prospective learners is one of the first steps in course design. It is vital to understand the motivation and the existing skills and knowledge that students bring. This is a principle for all teaching but becomes foremost when working with a non-traditional group.

102. Cumbria Institute of the Arts tackled this in 1999 by setting up the 'hypothetical student 2000' who might attend a course at the institution. It concluded that the imaginary student population would be liable to financial stringency, have a background with limited or no understanding of higher education, and come through diverse progression routes. Such a population presents quite a challenge.

103. The special needs and interests of two very different groups of students were accommodated at York St John College: graduate apprentices joining sports programmes, plus an opportunity for long-term job seekers to participate in a vocationally-based sports module.

104. A student-centred curriculum can be interpreted in different ways but usually includes confidence building, general literacy and numeracy, writing for academic purposes and IT skills. The London College of Printing has chosen a systemic approach: personal and

professional development is a core subject in all the newly validated undergraduate programmes. It tackles different aspects of students' key skills in each year of the undergraduate programme, with the intention of enabling them to analyse critically their own personal and academic development by the time they graduate. Similarly Ravensbourne College has made personal and professional development an integral part of all courses.

105. For defining and measuring learning outcomes, course designers have to be confident that all students admitted to the programme should be able to succeed – provided they work reasonably hard. The course team matches the knowledge, skills and understanding of potential recruits with what is required to achieve the learning outcomes. For example, the Geography Discipline Network at the University of the West of England emphasises that defining learning outcomes determines what, if any, adjustments need to be made for students with particular disabilities (such as mobility problems, visual impairments, mental health difficulties, dyslexia) to achieve these outcomes. This case study illustrates that '*modifications for disabled students should not be seen as a bolt-on/additional activity, but should fit comfortably within both the learning and teaching and the widening participation agenda and contribute towards an enhanced learning experience for all*'.

106. Careful forethought about teaching and learning materials for the specified population can result in modifications. These might be the minimal use of technical language, ensuring that only essential visual images are included and that these all have an explanatory text so that the visually impaired can cope (SURFACE project at the University of Salford).

107. The content of the programme also needs to be considered. For example, every module in the Early Childhood Studies course at University College Worcester incorporates elements to help students learn how best to meet the needs of disabled children.

Maximising retention

108. Having developed recruitment initiatives designed to attract students from under-represented groups, many HEIs have shifted attention to retention and student success. This is an acknowledgement that the needs of students from groups covered by widening participation initiatives cannot always be met through existing systems for student support.

109. Current arrangements for support are based on combinations of drop-in study skill centres, structured academic guidance sessions, interactive on-line facilities, published learning guides, 'summer university' revision classes, and supplementary course units. Some programmes (such as psychology at the University of Hull) provide alternative formats for teaching and learning materials and free photocopying for students with disabilities.

110. Student counsellors and intermediaries such as disability tutors provide important services for students, for example in negotiating workload, amended handouts, and concessions for assessment and examinations. In some cases students have their own support plan that identifies the support required and how it will be provided. Counselling services work with the 'whole' student, and may collaborate closely with centralised student

finance services to offer advice and manage funding applications. HEIs aim to provide a robust referral and communication system that serves all students and staff.

Assessment

111. There is some anxiety that widening participation lowers standards in higher education. However, those committed to increasing diversity in the student population strive to improve rather than depress the quality and standards of education. For example, York St John College uses national benchmarks related to national standards.

112. Several staff development programmes consider alternative means of assessment for students with disabilities that will enable students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge to full advantage. UMIST and University College Worcester have explored a range of flexible assessment methods, and in the latter's Early Childhood Studies Programme there are no formal examinations. Worcester students can also choose modules with their preferred assessment method. The University of Sussex set up a working group on assessment, partly to consider the needs of disabled students. It recommended that assessment regulations should be expressed as principles rather than as defined modes. This would enable students to find various ways to demonstrate 'in-depth engagement' with the subject.

Mainstreaming

113. 'Mainstreaming', that is integrating under-represented groups into the student population, is a principle embedded in the departmental strategies of many HEIs. This is clear from the measures described in the case studies to encourage all students to succeed. While mainstreaming is frequently associated with disability, widening participation activities cover other groups hitherto under-represented in higher education, such as mature students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The HEFCE's funds for disability encourage institutions to integrate and monitor provision for disabled students in all their strategies. As argued already in this guide, thoughtful provision to meet the individual needs of some students is likely to benefit other students and staff.

114. Where a strong study support system is embedded in an institution, mainstreaming is taken for granted. Those with disabilities are not treated any differently from other students, except that it is assumed that the programme may need slightly different interpretation. By reducing barriers to the inclusion of disabled students, barriers to the inclusion of all students are reduced. Consequently disabled students may feel less need to declare their disability and are less likely to feel different from their peers.

115. Case studies embed wider participation within subject areas, delineating the nature of support required adapted to the demands of the discipline. A case in point is the London College of Printing where close relationships exist between the disciplines and the development of academic writing and professional standards.

Some tensions

To declare or not to declare

116. Mainstreaming is not without perceived difficulties. HE staff will find it difficult to meet students' needs if the students do not declare them. Yet there is some tension for students in the competitive markets of admission to higher education and job opportunities. They may consider it more prudent not to declare any disability. This also applies to students who develop or become aware of a disability during their course. Perhaps where study support is acknowledged as being relevant for everyone then students and staff will accept such help as a normal part of undergraduate life. Certainly the Disability Discrimination Act means that providing for disability will need to be interpreted more widely than ramps and Braille.

Academic versus welfare role

117. There may be a tension emerging from academics undertaking what is often perceived as a 'welfare role', and therefore not awarded the priority it deserves. In other settings a disability tutor may perceive the role as an integral aspect of his/her academic duties, and not as an unwelcome burden.

118. It may be that recommendations from an academic member of staff for reasonable modifications to the curriculum are not challenged to the same extent as recommendations from a disability adviser based within Student Services, who may have little or no experience of teaching or research but a crucial role in welfare support services. On this basis the system may fail.

Tension between policies

119. While institutions promote the concept of inclusive education, departments sometimes find that the clash with other policies creates tensions – either in competition for resources or in discordant aims. For example, increasing the staff/student ratio and reducing time spent with students can create a major tension with an inclusive approach to teaching and learning. Inclusive education may also be seen as a threat or competitor for energy and resources in departments with research-led cultures.

120. Rather different tensions may arise from the very success of pre-entry programmes that then challenge the curriculum, teaching and assessment methods of the existing HE courses. Departments and institutions have responded to this challenge. For example, Queen Mary, University of London attracted funds for a drop-in centre to target students who were under-achieving due to a lack of support in maths. The case studies illustrate how many departments are reviewing their timing, pace of delivery, use of technology and possible flexibility in assessment.

121. Widening participation is seen in some circles as making up for poor recruitment of 'traditional' students. The policy does not have universal support or at least is not seen as necessary by all HEIs. Institutions that have no problem in recruiting target numbers have little financial incentive to widen or diversify the student population.

122. Widening participation in HE to 50 per cent of 18-30 year-olds by 2010 is a government priority but excludes another pool of possible students. To deal with a shortage of nurses in some localities, and also a need for nurses to upgrade their qualifications, Sheffield Hallam University and the London Nursing Initiative have targeted mature students. They aim to encourage both older people to enter nurse training and qualified nurses to aspire to further academic qualifications through a Diploma in Professional Studies in Nursing. As the Sheffield Hallam case study points out, developments in widening participation pre-date current government interests.

123. The major tension remains between policies and funds promoting academic and research excellence, and pressures on the sector to increase substantially the numbers and representativeness of students in higher education. Many academic staff are concerned about the impact of widening participation on current performance indicators.

Dealing with multiple initiatives

124. Special initiatives proliferate in education at all levels. Usually they are endorsed by special funding or other inducements. Extra resources are certainly drivers for change but – as the case study from the University of Sussex School of Legal Studies suggests – there is a danger that multiple initiatives will disrupt planning and be disconnected because they are run by individual enthusiasts.

125. It is tempting to respond to offers of special funding, but difficult to do so when such offers come at short notice and funds need spending quickly. Such projects are often perceived as peripheral to the main work of a department, and staff may feel they already have a full workload or have other interests that could gain greater recognition within the university and for their careers – such as research. The University of Sussex embedded development projects within the mainstream activities of the school, and therefore within the work allocation. Consequently, there was no shortage of volunteers to participate and the teaching and learning strategy was more effectively integrated.

126. Certainly multiple initiatives can result in staff being (or feeling) overloaded with too many areas of strategy or policy to address at once. A risk is that, each department prioritises the most relevant initiative, with the result that equality of opportunity can be overlooked.

127. At the University of Hull, the Department of Psychology did not concentrate effort on one initiative but rather reviewed what the department needed to do to fulfil the learning, teaching and assessment aspects of student life, and to collaborate with support services including welfare, library and resource centres. This HEI found it helpful to have an individual in the department with the time and the responsibility to monitor and review regularly the implementation of disability policy.

128. Academic planners juggle multiple initiatives with problems of sustainability. A common strategy is to use project funding from within the HEI or from external sources to promote innovation such as widening participation mechanisms. There is then the problem of

how to embed practice when special funding ceases and extra study support has to be funded internally.

Monitoring implementation

129. We require HEIs to monitor expected and unexpected effects of resource allocation and activities related to widening participation, in order to know how well objectives are being realised and where to make changes or even stop an initiative. This is done through widening participation strategies and action plans, which are updated annually through the institution's annual operating statement submitted to us. Monitoring of learning and teaching funding is done through institutional learning and teaching strategies, which are also updated through the annual operating statements.

130. The case studies illustrate but probably understate their monitoring and evaluation measures. We recommend that further information about monitoring methods and outcomes is sought from the relevant contact person.

131. It is unclear in the case studies submitted to this guide whether monitoring is solely at departmental level or whether the HEI has a central monitoring and evaluation system for widening participation. Liverpool John Moores University is an example of the latter: it has defined clear responsibilities and lines of accountability for widening participation, with co-ordinators and groups reporting back to the senior management team. Others such as the University of Teesside see the need to develop feedback mechanisms to assess the impact on retention of pre-enrolment and ongoing support for students in business studies. The Department of Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton asked all staff involved in learning and teaching to provide monitoring information. Each lecturer completed (in about a side and a half of A4) a common template covering five areas. These contributed to the departmental action plan for strategic improvement.

132. Hard evidence is collected for monitoring. For example, the University of Huddersfield can demonstrate the increase in the progression rate into HE of students on its 'Women into Science and Technology' access course over the last four years. Other forms of quantifiable evidence include the increase in attendance levels on the machine learning module at UMIST, increases in student numbers (Sheffield Hallam), and proportions of students successfully recruited from lower socio-economic groups (Cumbria Institute of the Arts). These data are easily available in all HEIs.

133. Qualitative evidence is collected in all HEIs more or less systematically through student feedback forms, focus groups, comments e-mailed to tutors, and web-sites. It is normal practice for tutors to make adjustments to the content, style and pace of courses and to amend teaching materials in the light of students' comments.

134. Besides clarifying the extent to which activities are successful in meeting goals in widening participation, evaluation should also identify unexpected outcomes. Several case studies refer to how changes in teaching and delivery styles to meet the needs of students with disabilities (such as better quality handouts, and use of e-learning) actually benefit *all*

students. Staff in other departments observed the success of support for maths and science students at Queen Mary, University of London, and now wish to develop post-entry maths support models for their own degree courses.

135. Not all mechanisms are successful, but it is crucial to find satisfactory – and not too time-consuming – ways to support staff in learning from their experience.

136. Devolution of resources and responsibility is usually accompanied by regular monitoring. Liverpool John Moores University provides a simple learning, teaching and assessment monitoring form that provides a consistent approach across the institution but enables schools to determine and report on their own priorities and progress.

Models of disability

137. The medical model of disability expects the student to make adjustments to the environment. At the University of Hull the Department of Psychology has adopted a social model of disability, where the expectation is that the environment needs to be adjusted. Some HEIs are accepting a social model more slowly, but there are other examples among the case studies.

138. In the Department of Computation at UMIST there is an underlying assumption that disabled learners do not have a separate learning style to non-disabled learners; they just fall along a continuum of learner differences. By providing a variety of flexible teaching methods this will accommodate learner differences and benefit all learners. The example of study support at the London College of Printing shows how the programme adapts methods of working to a student's strengths.

139. Similarly University College Worcester employs a diversity of teaching methods and therefore has to make fewer adjustments for disabled students. For example, there is a substantial amount of collaborative work, with peers drawing on the strengths of each member of the group. All students are given handouts in advance of lectures, and in large print. '*Focusing on the needs of disabled students has created best practice in teaching methods and styles for the whole course team.*'(University College Worcester)

Piloting innovative programmes

140. All the case studies have innovative aspects. To mention just three examples:

a. The MSc in Inclusive Design being piloted at the University of Salford will provide departments with practical ideas on how to plan and operate distance on-line courses suitable for people with a range of disabilities. The pilot is also helping staff to ensure that lecturers' material is as accessible on-line as it is in front of a class. The programme is developing exercises for measuring learning outcomes and choosing the best way to achieve each outcome for disabled students. Such strategies would benefit all students.

b. At the other end of the academic scale, the London Nursing Initiative has created a 'Keeping up with the Kids' programme of basic ICT training for parents. They use laptop computers at their children's primary school, a venue familiar and convenient for those unused to structured adult learning.

c. The London College of Printing and the London Nursing Initiative have mentoring schemes which provide students with support from someone who has had similar experiences, and give them the opportunity to mentor someone else. These contrast with 'deficit' models of disability and put a premium on shared experiences and understanding. The London Nursing Initiative scheme enables former access students to 'explore the realities of life as a mature returner' with people who respond to community outreach activities.

Planning for lifelong learning

141. Widening participation is a lifelong learning issue, whether it is to do with attracting students into higher education or encouraging further professional and/or academic development. Attracting students into higher education begins at school and need never stop. (Several universities have PhD students who are in their 70s.[3]) Providers have moved far beyond stereotypes of students embarking on higher education at 18.

142. Prospective students can take advantage of the flexibility in learning opportunities in terms of the construction of courses and the teaching and learning methods. Flexible approaches include: modular schemes, accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL), e-learning, units of study offered on different sites and/or through distance learning, work-based experience in initial and in-service programmes, and alternative methods of assessment. Energies seem concentrated on convincing students that with support they can succeed in higher education.

143. An implication of widening participation is that completion of one programme is not the end, but that providers need to offer further and more advanced opportunities for continuing professional development within a coherent institutional strategy.'*It may well be argued that a defining feature of successful widening participation is that people who would previously have seen HE as beyond their capabilities and expectations reach a point where they routinely engage in and achieve success in HE programmes.*' (Janet Hargreaves, Sheffield Hallam University)

Conclusions

144. The case studies provided in this guide affirm that staff in higher education are attracting students to study further, and supporting them to success. Based on these examples, the following seem to be some successful approaches to widening participation in higher education.

---

[3] *The Independent* 4 July 2002.

145. Students:

a. Identifying local demand and potential recruits early and supporting them from pre-entry to graduation through all components of their courses – including work experience – in order to retain them on the programme.

b. Viewing all students as potentially in need of some study support, so that those with disabilities are not singled out.

c. Assessing the skills and needs of students as soon as possible to determine the nature of support needed at vulnerable points in their student careers.

d. Not under-estimating students who have a weakness in conventional learning/assessment techniques. They are likely to be at one end of the continuum of all students and challenge the efficacy and wisdom of traditional teaching and assessment methods.

e. Treating students as adults responsible for their own learning by providing a framework and opportunities for personal and professional development linked with the curriculum, possibly as a distinct module.

f. Establishing mentor schemes, including peer mentoring, for students to gain from each other's experiences and share resources.

146. Programmes:

a. Designing programmes that are student-centred, with academic guidance focusing on:

i. Needs, progression and achievement.

ii. Providing student support within the context of a subject.

iii. Ensuring flexibility in modes of access and attendance, teaching and learning methods and assessment.

iv. Exploiting students' experiences and knowledge outside academia.

v. Taking risks.

147. Staffing:

a. Recognising that student support and guidance is everyone's responsibility.

b. Appointing staff to ensure that there is co-ordination between students and the academic and support services provided for their benefit.

c. Providing staff development as an essential component of widening participation.

d. Identifying how best to use 'champions' in fostering cultural change.

e. Demonstrating how involvement in inclusive education can benefit staff.

148. Institutional strategy:

a. Clarifying long-term institutional commitment to widening participation.

b. Establishing institution-wide policies and procedures that foster co-operation and collaboration between interested parties, rather than working in isolation.

c. Ensuring that resource strategies take account of the real costs of widening participation for different institutional services.

d. Devolving funding and implementation of strategy to departments, and ensuring that schemes are adequately monitored and evaluated and that experiences are disseminated across the institution and beyond.

e. Encouraging departments to make concrete plans for activities rather than vague aspirations or claims of existing excellence.

f. Providing adequate and relevant central services to support students and staff; integrating strategies for teaching and learning, widening participation and disability strategies; and co-ordinating the efforts of academics and specialist support staff in central service centres.

g. Recognising staff contributions to widening participation in criteria for appointment and promotion.

h. Setting up compulsory staff development programmes to support widening participation.

Annex A

Steering group

Cliff Allan	LTSN Programme Director
John Dickens	LTSN Subject Director – Engineering
Catherine Geissler	LTSN Subject Director – Health Sciences and Practice
Graham Gibbs	National Co-ordination Team for Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund
Geoff Layer	Action on Access
Philip Martin	LTSN Subject Director – English
Kate Murray	Regional Consultant, HEFCE
Janet Powney	Scottish Council for Research in Education (Chair and Editor)
Clive Robertson	LTSN Subject Director – Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
John Selby	Regional Consultant, HEFCE
John Storan	Action on Access
Carol Wilson	National Disability Team

Secretariat

Sheila Watt	Head of Learning and Teaching Policy, HEFCE
Christine Fraser	Policy Officer, HEFCE
Ben Lewis	Policy Officer, HEFCE

List of abbreviations

AP(E)L	Assessment of prior (experiential) learning
CADISE	Consortium of Art and Design Institutions in Southern England
CAVE	Constructed and Virtual Environment
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
ECS	Early childhood studies
ESF	European Social Fund
FDTL	Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning
FE	Further education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher education institution
HR	Human resources
HSISG	Human Science Information and Support Gateway
ILT	Institute for Learning and Teaching
L&T	Learning and teaching
LCP	London College of Printing
LDA	London Development Agency
LNI	London Nursing Initiative
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LTA	Learning, teaching and assessment
LTSN	Learning and Teaching Support Network
NCT	National Co-ordination Team
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
PPD	Personal and professional development
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
SCRE	Scottish Council for Research in Higher Education
SENDA	Special Educational Needs & Disability Act
SOAMS	Sheffield Outreach and Access to Medicine Scheme
SURFACE	Salford University Research Focus on Accessible Environments
TBS	Teesside Business School
TQEF	Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Services
WITS	Women into Technology and Science
WP	Widening participation

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

X	This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.
	This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").